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R 051852Z NOV 98
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2201
INFO CIA WASHDC
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USIA WASHDC 1912
USDOC WASHDC 3224
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
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AMEMBASSY LIMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 003357

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/08
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, ECON, EFIN, VE
SUBJECT: POLLING THE POLLSTERS: CVI (REPORT 4 OF 9)

REF: A) CARACAS 03287; B) CARACAS 03320; C) CARACAS 03332

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1.5(D)

REASON:

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
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DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2009 200503654

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SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION: CVI

2. (U) CVI IS MAINLY A MARKET RESEARCH FIRM, WHICH RECENTLY BECAME INVOLVED IN POLITICAL RESEARCH, MAINLY AS A MEANS TO EXPAND ITS MARKET RESEARCH BUSINESS INTO THE MEDIA CAMPAIGN MARKET. CVI HAS BEEN HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AS A TREND INDICATOR, HAVING BEEN THE
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FIRST TO IDENTIFY IRENE SAEZ'S DECLINE AND HUGO CHAVEZ'S RISE, AND THE CURRENT RISE IN HENRIQUE SALAS ROMER'S POPULARITY. END SUMMARY.

METHODOLOGY: SOLID AS A TREND INDICATOR

3. (U) CVI DOES A ROLLING POLL IN THE FIVE LARGEST CITIES THAT COMPRISE ONE THIRD OF THE POPULATION. CVI WILL TYPICALLY DO 2000 INTERVIEWS A WEEK IN THESE FIVE CITIES, OF WHICH A LITTLE OVER 1600 ARE OF VOTING AGE (18+). THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS ARE ONLY ASKED OF THE VOTING AGE POPULATION. CVI POLLSTERS CONDUCT FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS IN THE HOMES OF THE INTERVIEWEES. THE INTERVIEWERS USE MULTI-STAGE PROBABILITY SAMPLE UNTIL THE RESPONDENT SELECTION STAGE, WHERE QUOTAS ARE USED FOR AGE AND GENDER. THE SAMPLE FRAME USED IS THE NATIONAL CENSUS. [] REPORTS A LOW REFUSAL RATE FOR MARKET RESEARCH QUESTIONS, BUT A MUCH HIGHER REFUSAL FOR POLITICAL QUESTIONS. HE SAID THAT MOST OF THE REFUSALS ARE AMONG OLDER AND POORER PEOPLE, [] THINKS ARE AFRAID TO ANSWER POLITICAL QUESTIONS. THIS IS NOTEWORTHY BECAUSE POORER AND OLDER RESPONDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR CHAVEZ THAN SALAS. [] IS THE ONLY POLLSTER THAT WE ARE AWARE OF WHO IS DOING AN ANALYSIS OF THOSE WHO REFUSE TO ANSWER POLITICAL QUESTIONS. HE HAS THE ADVANTAGE OVER OTHER RESEARCHERS IN THAT THE REFUSAL TO ANSWER

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POLITICAL QUESTIONS DOES NOT MEAN THE INTERVIEW WILL BE TERMINATED, SINCE THE BULK OF HIS QUESTIONNAIRE CONSISTS OF MARKET RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

4. (U) CVI WILL DO VERIFICATION IF THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT A PARTICULAR INTERVIEWER'S WORK. SUPERVISION IS DONE ON A MINIMUM OF

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30 TO 33 PERCENT OF THE INTERVIEWS. INTERVIEWING IS DONE BOTH IN THE AFTERNOON AND NIGHT IN ORDER TO DRAW A GOOD SAMPLE OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING INDIVIDUALS. CVI USES PROFESSIONALS, NOT STUDENTS, FOR FIELD FORCE. CVI MAKES ARRANGEMENTS AHEAD OF TIME WITH THE BARRIO CHIEFS SO CVI HAS THE ABILITY TO GO DEEP INTO THE BARRIOS TO GET AN ACCURATE SAMPLE OF THE LOWER CLASSES.

5. (U) THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT CVI' METHODOLOGY:

--[] DOES NOT PRESENT HIS POLLING AS SOMETHING IT IS NOT--AN ACCURATE MEASURE FOR PREDICTING THE ELECTION. WHAT HIS POLLS ARE DESIGNED TO DO IS PROVIDE A ROLLING TRACKING POLL TO MEASURE ISSUE SALIENCE AND MEDIA USAGE, AS WELL AS TO TEST THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AD CAMPAIGNS IN THE MAJOR CITIES. FOR THIS PURPOSE, IT IS A VERY USEFUL TOOL.

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--[] ALSO ARGUES, THROUGH COMPARISON TO BROADER URBAN AREA POLLS, THAT HIS FIVE-CITY SAMPLE IS A GOOD MEASURE OF THE URBAN POPULATION OF VENEZUELA. THE REGULARITY OF CVI POLLS ALLOW IT TO PICK UP TRENDS IN THE ELECTORATE BEFORE OTHER POLLING ORGANIZATIONS. CVI WAS THE FIRST TO SHOW THE DECLINE OF SAEZ AND THE RISE OF CHAEZ. CVI WAS ALSO THE FIRST TO SHOW THE SUBSEQUENT

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2202
INFO CIA WASHDC
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USDOC WASHDC 3225
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LIMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 CARACAS 003357

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RISE OF SALAS AND THE STAGNATION OF CHAVEZ. THE SUBSEQUENT
CONFIRMATION OF THESE TRENDS IN LATER NATIONWIDE POLLS SHOWS THE
USEFULNESS OF CVI'S POLLS.

-- CVI INCLUDES A REASONABLE SAMPLE SIZE AND NUMBER OF SAMPLE
POINTS. AT LEAST UNTIL THE RESPONDENT SELECTION STAGE, THEY ARE
DOING A RANDOMIZED, MULTI-STAGE PROBABILITY SAMPLE BASED ON THE
BEST CENSUS PROJECTIONS.

-- A HIGH NUMBER, 30-33 PERCENT, OF ALL INTERVIEWS ARE SUPERVISED,
INCREASING THE CONFIDENCE LEVEL IN THE RESULTS.

-- CVI PLACES THEIR VOTE INTENTION QUESTION NEAR THE BEGINNING OF
THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS, REDUCING THE IMPACT OF PRIOR QUESTIONS ON
THE VOTE INTENTION RESULT.

-- CVI SCANS THEIR QUESTIONNAIRES IN, RATHER THAN RELYING ON

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KEYPUNCHERS, REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD OF ERRORS.

6. (U) THE BAD THINGS ABOUT CVI'S METHODOLOGY:

-- THE MAIN DRAWBACK IS THAT THE CVI POLLS DO NOT COVER THE
MAJORITY OF THE ELECTORATE. THEY ARE USEFUL FOR GENERAL TRENDS
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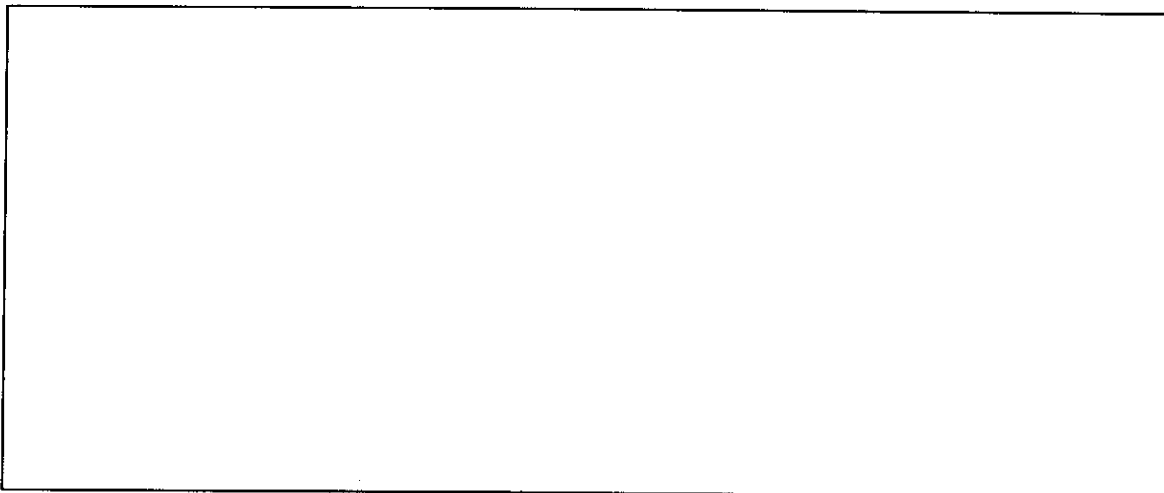
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BUT NOT FOR AN ELECTION PREDICTION.

-- LIKE MANY VENEZUELAN POLLSTERS, CVI USES QUOTAS FOR RESPONDENT
SELECTION, DECREASING THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE RESULTS.

-- CVI TACKS THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS ONTO ITS LARGER MARKET
RESEARCH POLL, WHICH INCLUDES RESPONDENTS AGE 10 AND ABOVE. BY
SEGMENTING OUT THE 18+ GROUP FOR ELECTION ANALYSIS, [] IS
DROPPING OUT ROUGHLY 24 PERCENT OF HIS OVERALL SAMPLE, WHICH LIKELY
WOULD ALSO REDUCE THE REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE SAMPLE.

-- [] IS ALSO DOING MORE INTERVIEWS PER SAMPLE POINT (12) THAN
OTHER POLLSTERS IN VENEZUELA, ALTHOUGH HE STILL MEETS MINIMUM
STANDARDS OF AT LEAST 100 SAMPLE POINTS PER SURVEY (HIS OVERALL
SAMPLE GENERALLY INCLUDES ABOUT 180 SAMPLE POINTS, BEFORE
SEGMENTING OUT THE VOTING AGE RESPONDENTS.) MARKET RESEARCHERS
WORLDWIDE ARE GENERALLY NOT AS METHODOLOGICALLY SOUND AS POLITICAL
RESEARCHERS AND ONE SHOULD ALWAYS BE A BIT WARY OF MARKET
RESEARCHERS WHO SUDDENLY DECIDE TO BEGIN DOING POLITICAL RESEARCH,
ALTHOUGH THIS IS NO REASON TO WRITE OFF CVI'S POLLS. IS TRACK
RECORD WOULD ARGUE OTHERWISE.

POTENTIAL POLITICAL BIASES: KILLING THE MESSENGER



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[REDACTED] THE RESULTS OF HIS EARLY POLLS WERE UNPALATABLE TO VARIOUS ELITE SECTORS IN VENEZUELA. AS THE MESSENGER OF UNWELCOME NEWS, HE WAS QUICKLY DRIVEN FROM THE BUSINESS OF PUBLISHING HIS RESULTS. HIS MEDIA USAGE DATA SHOWED THAT READERSHIP OF THE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS WAS FAR LOWER THAN THE FIGURES BEING PRESENTED BY THE MEDIA THEMSELVES. THE PRINT MEDIA SAW THIS AS A THREAT TO THEIR ADVERTISING INCOME. ALSO, WHEN CVI STARTED TO SHOW THE RISING VOTE TREND TOWARD CHAVEZ, THE ELITES AND OTHER POLLSTER REACTED BY ACCUSING CVI OF BEING ON THE PAYROLL OF CHAVEZ. THIS CONTINUED UNTIL THEIR OWN POLLS EVENTUALLY SHOWED THE SAME TREND.

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	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/019W			

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USDOC WASHDC 3226
DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
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CVI'S ELECTION ANALYSIS: SALAS RIDING THE WAVE IN

9. (U) [REDACTED] LATEST POLL RESULTS PUT SALAS IN A STATISTICAL
DEAD HEAT WITH CHAVEZ, ALTHOUGH AMONG REGISTERED/LIKELY VOTERS,
CHAVEZ STILL LED 45 TO 37. [REDACTED]

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10. (U) [REDACTED] CHAVEZ ORIGINALLY ROSE DUE TO THE
PROTEST/PUNISHMENT VOTE AGAINST THE TRADITIONAL PARTIES. HIS
DECLINE IS PRIMARILY DUE TO THREE FACTORS:

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-- CHAVEZ HAS BEGUN TO DEFINE HIMSELF. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] IN ORDER FOR CHAVEZ TO STAY IN THE
LEAD HE MUST AVOID DEFINING HIMSELF AND HIS STANCE ON SPECIFIC
ISSUES.)

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-- AD'S "FEAR" TELEVISION AD CAMPAIGN, ATTACKING CHAVEZ AS A
COUPSTER WHO THREATENS CONFRONTATION AND VIOLENCE.

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-- SALAS' AD CAMPAIGN, WHICH FEATURES SALAS AS THE SUCCESSFUL GOVERNOR WHO BROUGHT POLITICAL REFORM AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION TO THE STATE OF CARABOBO.

11. (U) [REDACTED] THE UNDECIDED VOTE WILL GO LARGELY TO SALAS, [REDACTED] IN CVI'S POLLS, SALAS IS STRONGEST AMONG HIGHER ECONOMIC CLASSES (A/B/C) AND YOUNGER VOTERS (18-29). CHAVEZ IS STRONGEST AMONG LOWER ECONOMIC CLASSES (D/E) AND OLDER RESPONDENTS (OVER 30). THE MALE BIAS FOR CHAVEZ AND FEMALE BIAS FOR SALAS IS EVENING OUT. AN ANALYSIS OF MOST LIKELY VOTERS SHOWS THAT THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE MALE (55%), MORE LIKELY TO BE OF THE LOWER CLASS (60%), AND MORE LIKELY TO BE OVER 30 (60%). THESE FACTORS TEND TO FAVOR CHAVEZ OVER SALAS, WHICH IS WHY CHAVEZ STILL HAS A LEAD AMONG THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE. ISSUES DO NOT SEEM TO BE DRIVING CANDIDATE SUPPORT. MOST OF THE ELECTORATE SEEMS PRETTY UNIFORM IN WHAT THEY THINK ARE THE TOP PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY PLAN TO VOTE FOR SALAS OR CHAVEZ. [REDACTED] THERE WILL BE A HIGHER THAN NORMAL TURNOUT BECAUSE VOTERS ACTUALLY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE A CHOICE IN THIS ELECTION, AS OPPOSED TO 1993.

CONCLUSION

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